

**WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 7, 2006
JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN,
SCHOOL COMMITTEE, & CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
7:30 P.M., BOS MEETING ROOM**

Warrant Committee, BOS, & CBC called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Warrant Committee members absent: Allison, Oates, Hofmann, Fitzgerald, and White

Others Present: Treasurer Carman, Dr. Holland, Dr. Missal, Dr. Aubin, Dr. McCanne, Julie Silverman, Jeffrey Conte, Thomas Younger, Jenny Fallon, all School Committee Members, and Board of Selectmen, and Barbara Hagg

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

BOS Chair Solomon asked that this meeting define initiative, definitions, who should address these and what resources needed, time line, and the date of the next meeting if needed. The solutions are not what are to be discussed this evening. Selectman Firenze would like to add system efficiencies or process efficiencies to evaluate how we do things. WC Member Hobbs would like core activities to be defined, especially in regards to outsourcing. School Committee Stratford would like the privatization of recreation department to be added – is this a duplicate of the outsourcing? Public Safety study to study the use of personnel and equipment.

Consideration of consolidating the issues was evaluated. Recreation privatization could be considered as a possibility under outsourcing. Core activities could overlap with outsourcing or privatization. School Committee member Stratford also brought up the fact that now is the time to discuss those town services that can be eliminated. Public safety study could be part of the system process efficiencies. This brings the total down to 10 items.

Defining the Issues:

Health Insurance - the cost to the town for active and retired employee health insurance.

Regionalization - combining services with other municipalities. Chair Jones stressed that we need to focus on those that are possible for example the fire department. Look at health, fire services, and 911. What kind of issues should the group look at: alternative legal model, allocation of costs among communities, labor issues, appetite of other communities to engage in this, scoping should include public safety as a whole (Brownsberger). Firenze asked if this was just for town or town/school. The sense is to look it as whole Town.

Outsourcing. Buy it, don't make it. Work is contracted out. Member Curtis asked about selling town building and leasing them back. Chair Jones would like this under asset management. Payroll (all departments), recreation (whole department).

Trash collection - trash, recycling, and yard waste – collection and disposal. Waste management in total. This could include a transfer station. We could also work with another community for a consolidated pickup/etc.

Consolidation of school/town departments: WC has discussed facility maintenance, MIS department, finance offices, and human resources.

New sources of revenues - charging for services that we currently do not charge for.

Asset Management - Spend money on maintaining our buildings and facilities.

Energy savings. This was something that Planning Board member Fallon brought up. Currently the ESCO project is being used for savings and improving equipment at the same time. She feels that equipment should be updated and choices made as we are building new buildings. This should include shutting off heat and utilities at night. A separate panel with expertise in this field would be useful. Energy or resource savings & recycling.

System or process efficiencies. BOS Member Firenze asked that we look at the way we are doing things. The software project is a good example of the possible efficiencies as was the consolidation of the PW department. Combining police & fire department.

Core activities. Member Hobbs stated that when we look at the array of services that the Town pays for, some of these that are currently paid for with town funds should not be. Member Heigham clarified that we should be identifying what is statutorily mandated.

The next job is assignments:

Member Brownsberger stated that the four items: regionalization, outsourcing, system or process efficiencies, and consolidating of town/school departments all pertain to department activities and in-depth analysis. Member Paolillo agrees that there is overlap but he is not in favor of diluting the initial study of the topic. This would leave future collaboration up to the Committee chairs.

Member Fallon stated that the consolidation of the town/school function should start with the staff. They should get together and report on their workload, shared functions, scope of existing and consolidated departments. She feels that the best place to start would be at the department level. Widmer stated that all of these areas should involve staff and this particular item not be broken out.

Member Paolillo asked that there be coordination of meetings with the department heads so that a department head does not repeat the same thing over and over.

BOS Chair asked that we go down the list and make the assignments & then determine if there are actually places that can be consolidated. School Chair Gibson wanted to be sure that there are actual savings in personnel or efficiencies and be sure that these will actually be achieved before we go down that road. Member Callanan wanted us to identify who would make the first step, although being mindful of history look at things with a fresh eye. Member Callanan stated that when looking at consolidation, the differences in salaries and benefits should not be an overriding reason to not go this way.

Assignments:

Health Insurance - the report has been done and the implementation is what now is where we are at (Member Curtis). Because of the cost, this has reached the level of importance of going on the top of the list. There are also administrative savings that can be looked at by the health insurance committee. Self insurance was something that the professionals on the Committee felt was very important. Chair Jones asked that the Committee also look at the actuarial report on post employment health insurance. Member Curtis and his committee will come back to the BOS with more structured suggestions on how to proceed – besides bargaining. Member Paolillo asked that the committee look at estimates for savings with different options. Member Curtis stated that these have already been costed out. The administrative savings would be the place where the committee would spend their time. BOS Member Firenze asked that the committee come up with recommendations with next steps. Member Curtis stated that there are two phases – the collective bargaining scenario and the other is the administrative things. Collective bargaining is the town's responsibility and this group's expertise resides with administrative changes for savings. Time line for initial report with more finely tuned cost benefit analysis: September 2006.

Regionalization – this would have to start at the top or a Committee that is charged with direction by the BOS. Member Paolillo would be interested and BOS Member Firenze is also interested. BOS Member Firenze stated that meeting with other boards would be part of the charge. The School Committee was asked to join. They felt that they already act collaboratively with other school districts. School Committee Member Kathy Miller felt that there would, or may be, hard feelings in other schools with the name of “regionalization”. She has also agreed to be part of this group as did School Committee Member Rittenburg. Member Curtis felt that there should be other experts from non elected or appointed boards that could add their expertise. WC Chair Jones felt that Lynn Doblin would be a good addition to this group since she has had extensive experience in North Carolina. Liz Allison, although no in attendance was volunteered by Chair Jones with her expertise in employee benefits. This should be renamed regionalization or collaboration per Member Heigham in order to work within the needed confines. WC Chair asked that the Recreation question not be included with this group since the WC is working on this separately. Timeline for initial report September 2006 for all groups.

Waste management: Trash Collection/recycling citizen committee has been reinstated. This is a group of six members with some expertise in this area. Peter Castanino is the

town liaison to this group. This group will also be looking at the possibility of a transfer station. Tom Younger will also be working with this group. Chair Jones volunteered Member White for this Committee.

Consolidation of town/school departments. School Committee Chair Gibson and School Committee Member Stafford along with Tom Younger and Mike Widmer and Pat Bruschi will be the initial members of this committee although the school may be bringing in more people.

New sources of revenue. Member Heigham volunteered. Roy Epstein had some good ideas that were presented at a prior WC meeting and should be included. BOS Member Firenze stated that this could affect new development and volunteered Geoff Tillotson and Planning Board Member Fallon.

BOS Member Firenze asked if we could notify TM members that input and joining of these committees would be welcome. BOS Chair Solomon stated that there will be a quarterly newsletter that is being sent out to all electric customers and perhaps people could be asked to participate. Planning Board Member Fallon stated that there was a model used for a large open meeting for the first strategic planning meeting where the public was invited and asked to join the group. The newspaper will also be writing something that could invite people to join. WC Member Paolillo stated that PILOT payments should also be looked at.

Asset management: Pat Bruschi, Jones, Brownsberger, husband of School Committee Member Stafford. Capital projects and the work of the mega group would fit into this category.

Energy savings. Sustainable Belmont group has begun to look at many of these issues. Ron Lunt (Resource) and Planning Board Member Fallon, Jan Kruse, Raffi Manjikian, BOS Chair Solomon, Peter Castanino (resources) on the water/sewer side would be good additions.

System process efficiencies. Tom Younger and Chair Jones will coordinate. BOS Member Firenze feels that WC Members Allison & Paolillo would be good additions. Paolillo agrees with this charge.

Core activities. Member Tillotson feels that this cuts across everyone. Member Paolillo feels that this is part of sources of revenue and we should ask if we can charge a fee. Chair Jones asks whether charging a fee is even a consideration. Should we be doing all existing work or not? Younger showed how the core services extend outward for a circle and working outward showing less needed services. Member Doblin feels that a citizen survey should be done with a ranking of wanted services. Member Callanan volunteered for the committee but would like to see this tied to new sources of revenues. BOS Chair wants this kept as a separate activity for now and perhaps combining these later on. This will be discussed at the BOS meeting on Monday.

All committees will report at a joint meeting in September. There was a lively discussion of expectations and process. What is the minimum we can expect? Who will convene the meetings? What is the definition of charge, areas to be discussed, sequence of discussion, opportunities within these activities, time frame, real opportunity for this, and evaluating probability of implementation within a certain time frame. Further, the scope of work to be done, fact finding, expertise needed in each area, how much actual work being done in each area, how we think we can do this, what facts are needed, and recommended next step,. What will have an impact on the FY07 budget, Fy08 Budget, or thereafter?

Member Paolillo stressed that our current processes are unsustainable without major tax increases. Yes it is important not to set a goal so high that we are bound to fail. How do we identify best practices from other benchmark communities asked School Committee Member Stratford? Member Widmer stated that health insurance is the only item that could have potential short term savings and possible savings in this category overshadow all the other initiatives.

BOS Chair Solomon summarized the expectations in September from work groups: scope of work, opportunities, probably of implementation, facts needs, time line for achievement, next steps, benchmarking would be part of information gathering, not reporting.

List of key contact people for each section that will be initiative:

Health insurance: Phil Curtis
Regionalization: Mark Paolillo
Outsourcing: Lynn Doblin
Waste management: Peter Castanino
School/Town Consolidation: Mike Widmer
New Revenues: Jim Heigham
Energy Savings: Dr. Solomon
20 year Asset Management: Ralph Jones
Processes: Tom Younger
Core activities: BOS discussing on Monday

Member Brusch stressed that all meetings must be posted and notes taken.

Motion by Member Heigham to adjourn at 9:30 p.m.